DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 471 236 SP 041 242

TITLE	A Report of the AFT Task Force on Union-Sponsored Professional Development.
INSTITUTION	American Federation of Teachers, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	2001-06-00
NOTE	36p.
AVAILABLE FROM	American Federation of Teachers, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20001-2079. Tel: 202-879-4491.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Educational Quality; Elementary Secondary Education; *Faculty Development; *Labor Relations; *Teacher Associations; Teacher Improvement; *Unions
IDENTIFIERS	*American Federation of Teachers; Professionalism

ABSTRACT

This report presents an expanded vision for the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) as a professional union that advocates for its members and that, through collaborative labor management relations, assumes joint custody for ensuring the quality of institutions in which members work and services they provide. The report calls on the AFT to elevate professional issues, particularly professional development, to a more prominent role in the organization and to ensure that helping members improve their professional practice is integrated into the union's core mission. AFT Task Force recommendations emphasize building the capacity of union leaders and staff to carry out this work, focusing on professional development issues that run across various levels of the union and those that are specific to a particular level of union. Recommendations address both process and content. Each recommendation includes actions for the national AFT and corollary actions for state and local affiliates. Recommendations include that the AFT better align internal organizational structures and practices with an enhanced commitment to professional issues and professional development for leaders and members; review AFT professional development efforts; and provide ongoing information about, and support for, professional issues and development. Two appendixes include attributes of a true profession and research-based characteristics of effective professional development. (Contains 10 references.) (SM)

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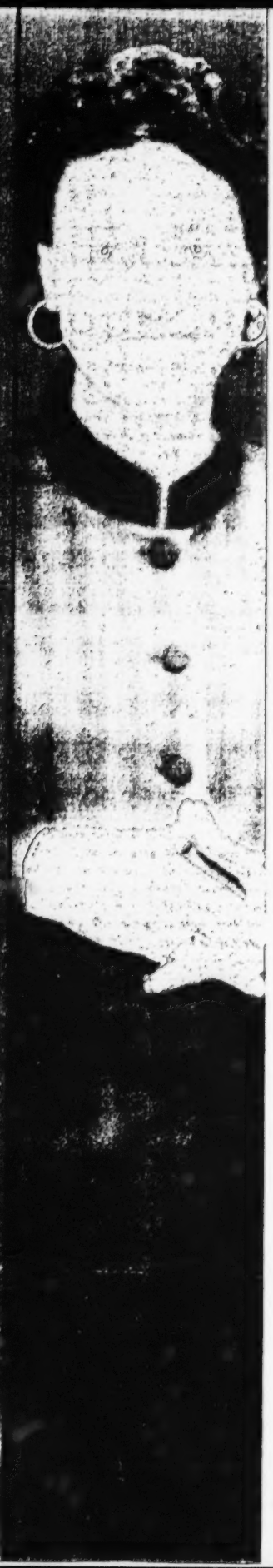

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AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

AFT Task Force on Union-Sponsored Professional Development

Shelley Potter, *Task Force Chair*
San Antonio (Texas) Federation of Teachers

Colleen Callahan
Rhode Island Federation of Teachers & Health Professionals

Donna Chiera
Perth Amboy (N.J.) Federation/AFT

Mary Jo Connolly
Minneapolis Federation of Teachers (Para Chapter)

Antonia Cortese
New York State United Teachers

Maureen Dinnen
Florida Education Association

Nina Esposito-Visgitis
Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers

Aminda Gentile
UFT Teacher Center Professional Development Program (New York City)

Arthur Hochner
Temple Association of University Professionals (Pa.)

Hattie Hollie
The Baltimore Teachers Union

Nat LaCour
American Federation of Teachers

Merri Mann
United Teachers of Dade (Fla.)

Katherine McKenna
Syracuse (N.Y.) Teachers Association Inc.

Brenda Mitchell
United Teachers of New Orleans

Ana Pomar
Education Austin (Texas)

Marcia Reback
Rhode Island Federation of Teachers & Health Professionals

Judy Schaubach
Education Minnesota

David Sherman
United Federation of Teachers (New York City)

George Springer
Connecticut Federation of Educational and Professional Employees

Louise Sundin
Minneapolis Federation of Teachers

Rob Weil
Douglas County (Colo.) Federation of Teachers

Norma Jean White
Chicago Teachers Union

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A REPORT OF THE AFT TASK FORCE ON **UNION-SPONSORED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

JUNE 2001

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY / 5

THE ISSUE / 7

What Do We Mean By a Professional Union? / **8**

- Enhancing the Profession/Improving Members' Practice / **9**
- Union-Management Collaboration / **11**
- Balancing Personal and Public Interests / **12**

Why Move to Professional Unionism? / **12**

What Must We Do? / **13**

What Do Leaders Need To Know and Be Able To Do? / **15**

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? / 19

Recommendations / **19**

REFERENCES / 27

APPENDIX A / 28

APPENDIX B / 29

DESIGN: BORNSTEIN ASSOCIATES / COVER PHOTO: RICHARD CARSON
INSIDE FRONT COVER PHOTO: LORI KING / PHOTO PAGE 1: MICHAEL CAMPBELL
PHOTOS PAGES 2, 3, 19, 27, 31: BRUCE GILBERT / PHOTO PAGE 4: JIM THOMPSON
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This American Federation of Teachers Task Force Report on Union-Sponsored Professional Development lays out an expanded vision for the AFT as a professional union—that is, a union that advocates for the profession as well as for its members, and one that, through collaborative labor-management relations, assumes joint custody for ensuring the quality of the institutions in which its members work and the services they provide. The report calls on the AFT to elevate professional issues generally, and professional development specifically, to a more prominent role in the organization and to ensure that assisting members to improve their professional practice is integrated into the core mission of the union. While the report focuses on the preK-12 division, many of the ideas and recommendations are equally applicable to other AFT constituencies.

The task force recommendations focus on building the capacity of union leaders and staff to carry out this work. The recommendations build on the work of the Futures I and II reports and the Leadership Development Task Force Report. They focus on professional development issues that run across various levels of our union, as well as those that are specific to a particular level of the union—from national AFT programs and products to state legislative activities to local contract language. They deal with both process and content. Each recommendation includes actions for the national AFT and corollary actions for state and local affiliates.

In particular, the task force recommends that the AFT:

- Work to better align internal organizational structures and practices with an enhanced commitment to professional issues and professional development for leaders and members.

- Review AFT professional development efforts.
- Develop and implement new or expanded training programs for union leaders and staff that enable them to integrate professional issues and professional development into the core of their union work.
- Disseminate information about recognized, research-based professional development practices and programs to assist state federations and locals in their roles as advocates, brokers, collaborators, and, to a lesser extent, deliverers of professional development.
- Use technology to increase access to, and communication about, professional issues and professional development.
- Expand current partnerships and develop new strategic alliances to increase the union's capacity to address professional issues and secure high-quality professional development for members.
- Provide ongoing information about, and support for, professional issues and professional development.

Affiliates differ in their capacity to carry out many of these recommendations and should pursue them accordingly. Size, resources, and local conditions will all play a role in how much can be done.

Similarly, the AFT cannot immediately implement all of these recommendations, but we can develop a strategy that in the long run will enable us to become more effective in meeting the needs of our members and the children they serve.

THE ISSUE

Good teaching has always been important. But it assumes added urgency in this era of high standards. We now expect *all* students to achieve at higher levels. And we know from research that good teachers are key to reaching this goal. Teacher knowledge and skill can make a difference between a student who is successful in school and one who is not (Ferguson, 1991; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996).

To meet the challenge before them, teachers need an ever deeper foundation of content knowledge and a comprehensive array of instructional strategies. They must know how to diagnose students' individual learning needs as well as how to meet those needs. And often they must accomplish this in large classes with students whose academic skills vary dramatically. Professional development is the linchpin of improving practice. Without continuous and effective opportunities to hone their craft, teachers will be less able to meet the expectations placed on them; with such opportunities, prospects for improved student achievement are brighter.

In recognition of the central role professional development plays in ensuring teacher quality and improving student achievement, in 2000, the AFT executive council created a Task Force on Union-Sponsored Professional Development. The task force's charge was to recommend policies and strategies to increase the capacity of the union to secure high-quality professional development for its members. While this report focuses on the preK-12 division, many of the ideas and recommenda-

A PROFESSIONAL UNION TAKES AS ITS MISSION ENHANCING BOTH THE PROFESSION AND THE PRACTICE OF ITS MEMBERS.

tions are equally applicable to AFT's other constituencies.

Not long into its work, the task force realized that increasing the capacity of the union *at all levels* to meet new educational challenges requires thinking boldly about how professional issues and professional development can be integrated with other union responsibilities. Broadening the union's role to meet members' expanding needs entails rethinking organizational structure, resource allocation, organizing efforts, and training strategies.

In short, the work of the professional development task force is not just about thinking through ways to expand union-sponsored professional development courses. It is not simply about requesting new budget allocations, or reconfiguring staff responsibilities, or launching new programs. The work of this task force leads to serious thinking about how the AFT achieves its vision of supporting the practice of its members and enhancing the quality of the institutions in which they work, and it is about how the AFT defines itself as a professional union.

What Do We Mean By a Professional Union?

The AFT Futures I report (AFT, 1992) recognized that the AFT was evolving "from a union that has learned to represent our members' needs for fair rewards and decent working conditions, ... [to] a union that is learning to further [members'] aspirations for professional growth and empowerment at the workplace." The report emphasized the importance of collective bargaining rights for all members and provided the framework for the AFT to transform itself from an industrial union to a professional union:

> ...We envision an AFT that is recognized by members and the public at large as a union dedicated both to the well-being of its members and to the people they serve. We envision a membership empowered

to improve the quality of their own working lives as well as the effectiveness of their service to the public.

The Futures I report recognized that a professional union takes as its mission enhancing both the profession and the practice of its members.[1] Its work is anchored in three mutually reinforcing tenets, identified by Kerchner and Koppich (1993) as:

1. *Joint custody of education improvement*—The union and the district define education as a collective and shared enterprise. Improving schools, and improving student achievement, are the mutual obligation, and the mutual responsibility, of both union and management.

2. *Union-management collaboration*—The hard work of improving schools cannot be accomplished in an atmosphere of continuous rivalry and antagonism. Union and management need to find ways to develop bonds of trust that allow them to set aside old issues and focus on education improvement.

3. *Public responsibility*—The union's actions must be based largely on what is in the public interest. This does not mean that a professional union abandons the interests of its members. But a professional union balances teachers' legitimate self-interests with the larger interests of teaching as an occupation and education as an institution.

Given these criteria, what would we take as evidence that an organization is a professional union?

Enhancing The Profession/
Improving Members' Practice

An organization that enhances the profession it represents plays a central role in the critical decisions that shape that profession. For a union, this means involvement in areas where management has traditionally resisted union participation. Challenging the conventional wisdom about what unions do is part of the process of becoming a professional union.

Selection. A key component of enhancing the profes-

[1] See Appendix A, Attributes of a True Profession.

sion is ensuring that only qualified individuals are admitted to practice and employed as teachers. Unions and school districts together can be vigilant about considering for employment only individuals who have completed some credible form of teacher preparation and are prepared to assume classroom responsibilities. Through involvement in the hiring process, the union serves a gatekeeper role, ensuring that only those individuals who meet professional standards are hired.

Induction. Following initial hiring, the union has an obligation to help create the conditions that afford new teachers a fair shot at succeeding. This means negotiating induction programs for novice teachers that include mentoring by highly qualified, experienced teachers. This period of induction ought to provide new teachers with the opportunity to hone the skills they developed in teacher preparation, observe accomplished practitioners, and gain added professional confidence as they translate the theory of their college courses into the practice of classroom teaching.

Professional Development. Professional development is a centerpiece of efforts to enhance the profession and improve members' practice. Even the most accomplished teacher understands that there is always new content to learn, a new skill to develop, a new pedagogy to master. A union that is devoted to improving members' practice recognizes that it has a vested interest in helping its members increase their expertise.

Professional Standards. Standards by which teachers' professional practice can be fairly judged are essential. AFT locals have begun to involve themselves in maintaining professional standards through peer assistance and review programs, which develop collective responses to important questions: What are the indicators of good teaching? How do we support and sustain effective practice? How do we help our colleagues continue to improve their practice? What steps do we take when efforts to offer support and assistance fall short?

Professional Voice. Finally, enhancing the profession means paving the way for teachers at schools to use their expertise to make informed decisions about practice

designed to improve student achievement.

A PROFESSIONAL UNION NEEDS TO MOVE BEYOND OLD ANTAGONISMS AND FORGE NEW ALLIANCES.

Union-Management Collaboration

Developing union-management collaboration around issues of education improvement can be a challenging proposition for unions and school districts alike. District management often maintains a limited view of the "proper" role of a union. That view often does not extend the union's role to areas of professional practice or education policy. And unions have sometimes found it difficult—often for good reason, but difficult nonetheless—to move beyond adversarial relations to more productive labor-management arrangements.

But if a professional union is to contribute to improving the quality of members' work, then it needs to move beyond old antagonisms and forge new alliances. Union-management collaboration carries with it the obligation to assume responsibility both for implementing education improvement strategies and for the consequences of those strategies.

As union and management assume joint custody of education improvement, they continue to blur the lines between what is conventionally thought of as "union work" and that which is traditionally considered "management work." Many AFT locals have taken this step, with joint labor-management committees, lead-teacher positions, union-sponsored professional development, teacher-led evaluations, and school-based decision-making.

Professionalism, cooperation, and civility—hallmarks of a professional union—do not imply capitulation. Union and management will continue to disagree, sometimes over traditional areas such as wages and working conditions, sometimes over educational program and policy issues related to improving student achievement. Failure to agree on some issues should not be seen as a liability but rather as part of the process of professional engagement.

514

Balancing Personal and Public Interests

Any union worth its salt protects the interests of its members. Fair wages and decent working conditions are prerequisites to employee involvement and union participation in expanded professional areas. Nonetheless, a professional union connects its actions to the public good. The consequences of collective bargaining, or of any type of labor-management agreement, are integral to, not separate from, the primary goal of education reform: improving student achievement. When a professional union negotiates a class-size agreement, implements an assignment or transfer policy, or adopts regulations concerning professional development or professional compensation enhancements, it is mindful that the results of those agreements are connected to improving student achievement.

Why Move to Professional Unionism?

The Futures I report acknowledged that the AFT's future depends upon our becoming a professional union. To achieve our ends, satisfy our members, and ensure public support, we must extend our activities. Many of our leaders, as well as the teachers who grew up in the union movement of the 1960s and 1970s, are retiring. They are being replaced by a younger cohort of teachers whose interests, needs, and concerns are quite different.

As Harvard education professor Susan Moore Johnson observed:

> Studies have shown that, as a group, [retiring teachers] value job security, prefer autonomy to teamwork, tolerate isolation, eschew competition, respect administrative authority, ...oppose differential treatment within their ranks, and express little interest in career advancement. When today's...teachers consider other jobs that feature variety, teamwork, risk-taking, entrepreneurial opportunities, and high pay, they often find the values and priorities of the retiring generation puzzling and outmoded (Johnson, 2000).

New teachers also face unprecedented teaching and learning demands. Many are overwhelmed by student populations with very diverse needs, lack of appropriate

curricula, limited access to resources, and increasing demands for public accountability. These new teachers need more knowledge and skills to be successful in their work. And they are searching for opportunities, be they networks, electronic chat rooms, or unions, that will help them achieve this goal.

A PROFESSIONAL UNION CONNECTS ITS ACTIONS TO THE PUBLIC GOOD.

In addition, many of the issues that motivated the drive for collective bargaining three decades ago are not salient to new teachers. They want something different from their union. We need only look to our own internal research:

- In a national poll of AFT members, teachers most frequently identified "working for reforms to improve education and the teaching profession" as the most important activity for the national union.
- When teachers in Florida were asked what is the most important thing the union can do for them, more than 50 percent of members and non-members alike said, "deal with educational issues and the professional needs of teachers."
- In a poll of new teachers, when asked what they want their union to do, a common response was, "My union should help me do my job better... ."

The message is clear. The teachers who will become the foundation of our union for the next several decades want an organization that focuses intensely on their professional needs. And, these teachers include professional needs, along with decent salaries and good working conditions, in their definition of "bread and butter" issues. We fail to heed their message at our own peril.

What Must We Do?

First, we must commit to making professional development integral to union work. This does not mean "adding on" another responsibility for union leaders and staff. Rather, it means thinking through ways in which helping

INCORPORATING PROFESSIONAL ISSUES INTO THE CORE OF UNION ACTIVITIES REQUIRES NEW SKILLS FOR OUR LEADERS.

to enhance the practice of our members permeates everything we do as an organization—from negotiating contracts to developing state legislation to choosing our professional partners. Making this commitment will not be easy. All too often, many of our leaders consider professional development to be a nicety or extra, something to work on if time and resources remain once the "real" work of the union—i.e., organizing, negotiating contracts, servicing grievances, engaging in political action—is done.

Of course, there are those who have labored long and hard in the professional issues/professional development vineyards. The AFT has developed programs of which it is justly proud—Educational Research and Dissemination (ER&D) being a prime example. The union was an early supporter of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. And the AFT's advocacy of peer assistance and review and new teacher induction reflect the union's commitment to well-structured, standards-based support for improving practice.

But in our efforts to include professional issues in union work, we often create parallel union structures. There are the people who focus on organizing, collective bargaining, and political issues. These are usually the elected leaders. They receive public and union recognition for the work they do. And there is no question that the work they do is essential. But they typically have little involvement with professional issues beyond, perhaps, negotiating some contract language.

Then there are the union activists who focus on professional issues. They are less likely to occupy leadership positions. And their contribution to the union often goes uncelebrated. They may operate with small budgets and little or no staff support. And their work often is not considered central to the mission of the union.

But we are now at a crossroad. We need to consider ways to integrate what our members need to improve their practice into other union functions affecting their needs, such as organizing, negotiating contracts, process-

ing grievances, and defending due process. And to do this, it is incumbent upon us to provide our leaders with the requisite knowledge and skills they need to integrate professional issues into their work.

What Do Leaders Need To Know and Be Able To Do?

To incorporate professional issues into the core of union activities, many of our union leaders will need to develop and enhance skills that were useful but not essential in their more traditional roles. Along with honing negotiating skills, they must:

- *Become adept at enhancing positive labor-management relations* even in the face of hostility and rejection from local school boards and administrators. Leaders need to be able to make these relationships not just cordial, but productive. They need the skills to approach interactions with district superintendents from a strategic perspective, with a goal in mind and a plan for accomplishing this goal.

- *Learn how to build effective coalitions and partnerships* with other groups and agencies having similar goals. The union cannot go it alone. It cannot be responsible for absorbing the costs associated with enhancing members' practice, nor for the programs members should have available to them. Union leaders need to be able to develop partnerships and strategic alliances with the district and other organizations, and to work collaboratively to raise funds and develop programs around improved professional practice.

- *Become more effective communicators* on professional issues, both to their members and to the public. Enhancing the role of the union with regard to professional development challenges beliefs about what unions do. It challenges the public perception as well as the views of some union members and potential members. Effectively making the case for the union's involvement requires well-developed communication

skills and the ability to adapt quickly to changing circumstances.

- *Become more involved in the education decision-making* that affects their members. To do this, leaders must have a command of the educational issues that members face—be they standards-based education, professional development, effective reading programs, or new designs for professional compensation.
- *Become skilled at analyzing state and/or district budgets* to identify potential funding sources to address professional issues.

Union leaders must understand the big picture. They must know what the elements of high-quality professional development are and what policies will make continuous professional improvement for members possible. They must be armed with adequate information so they can be the first line of defense against shoddy programs and ill-conceived policies. Thus, the AFT should assist leaders to:

- Advocate for high-quality professional development and, where feasible, involve the union in offering it;
- Make strategic professional development choices linked both to teachers' and students' learning needs;
- Negotiate new contract provisions, or other labor-management agreements, that provide time, support, resources, and incentives for teachers to engage in effective professional learning; and
- Find means to dedicate added resources to make professional development a centerpiece of union efforts to improve professional practice.

Our leaders need to understand the variety of roles that the union can assume, including:

- *Professional development advocate*—All leaders can advocate for high-quality professional development. With knowledge about what good professional development looks like,[2] leaders will be able to make the case before policymaking bodies about ways in which

effective professional development builds a bridge to improved student achievement. And in making this case, they will be able to argue more persuasively for increased funding, support, and time for members to engage in professional development.

UNION LEADERS MUST UNDERSTAND THE BIG PICTURE.

- *Professional development broker*—Most local and state leaders have, or can develop, the capacity to broker professional development for members with other organizations that offer such training. Assuming the role of broker enables the union to leverage existing programs to increase the array of professional opportunities available to members.

- *Professional development collaborator*—Working with partners, the union can expand the kinds of professional development it offers. The collaborator role relieves the union of the burden of financing professional development on its own, or developing the wide range of professional offerings that members need, while allowing the union to be a full partner in ensuring the quality of programs to which it attaches its name.

- *Professional development deliverer*—Many local and state affiliates already offer their own union-created professional development programs, usually through Teacher Centers, NBPTS support groups and/or the ER&D program. Others can, over time, begin to offer such programs. These union-sponsored programs are almost always funded through negotiated agreements with the district, and may be supplemented by monies from the state or federal government.

We recognize that not every local or state affiliate will be able to assume all of the roles at once and that it takes time to reach the highest level of activity in each role. But all affiliates can assume one or more of them early on and then begin the task of increasing capacity. Everyone can do something. And every state and local affiliate has indi-

[2] See Appendix B, Research-Based Characteristics of Effective Professional Development.

viduals—executive board members, building representatives, interested members—who have knowledge and expertise and who, in fact, must be involved, because making professional development central to union work changes their work as well.

In sum, the union's future depends in part on our ability to secure high-quality professional development for our members. The union cannot do this alone, and we shouldn't have to. We can secure quality professional development on a sufficient scale if our leaders integrate professional issues into their work, and develop partners who will fund and assist in delivering high-quality services to our members.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

This report calls on the AFT to elevate professional issues generally, and professional development specifically, to a more prominent role in the organization and to ensure that assisting members in improving their professional practice becomes part of the union's core mission. Achieving this vision will require a comprehensive, unionwide, sustained partnership among the national organization and its state and local affiliates.

The recommendations presented here build on the work of the Futures reports and the Leadership Development Task Force Report. They focus on professional development issues that run throughout the various levels of our union, as well as those that are specific to a particular level of the union—from national AFT programs and products, to state legislative activities, to local contract language. They deal both with process and with content. Each recommendation includes actions for the national AFT and corollary actions for state and local affiliates.

Recommendations

1. The AFT should better align internal structures and practices with an enhanced commitment to professional issues and professional development.

The national AFT should:

- Examine its current structure, staffing, and resource allocations and make recommendations to the president and executive council regarding necessary changes

that implement the leadership development task force recommendation that professional matters be integrated with the traditional union activities in a manner which will allow both functions to complement each other.

- Build on current efforts to implement the leadership development task force recommendations concerning better coordination of professional development activities within and among other AFT departments.
- Expand the capacity of the state educational issues coordinators' network to assist local affiliates in the various roles locals can play in securing professional development opportunities for their members.
- Include professional issues and professional development on the agendas of AFT meetings, such as the preK-12 program and policy council, the state federation and local presidents conferences.
- Help state and local affiliates identify sources of funding to hire staff with expertise in professional issues/professional development and assist them in integrating such staff into the core structure of the union.
- Acknowledge outstanding professional development activities of affiliates.
- Include professional issues and professional development articles in union publications.
- Design a self-assessment tool to help state and local affiliates "map" their current place on the professional unionism continuum.

State and local affiliates should:

- Use the self-assessment tool developed by the national AFT to review internal structures and practices to better align them with a commitment to professional development.
- Prominently include professional issues and professional development on the agendas of meetings such as executive board, state executive council, and building representatives.

- Take appropriate steps to ensure that leaders take every opportunity in conversations with members to connect traditional union activities and professional issues.
- Include professional issues and professional development articles in publications.
- Work with the national AFT to find the means to develop staff whose assigned responsibility is educational issues/professional development.
- Create a network of local leaders in each state who deal with professional issues and professional development.

2. Develop and implement new or expanded training programs for union leaders and staff that will enable them to integrate professional issues and professional development into the core of their union work.

The national AFT should:

- Review and make changes to programs, such as the Union Leadership Institute and New Staff School, to ensure they include strategies for leaders and staff to blend traditional union functions and professional issues/professional development. Such programs should develop the capacity of leaders and staff to become more effective advocates, brokers, collaborators, and deliverers in the professional development arena.
- Develop curriculum to help local building representatives deal with professional issues as part of their union responsibilities.
- Make provision for training both elected and professional issues leaders so that the former are knowledgeable about professional issues/professional development and the latter have a working knowledge of the exigencies that shape political decisions.
- Develop training programs to help AFT leaders secure added professional development dollars. Such training should focus on building the capacity of leaders to: develop partnerships with school districts and other agencies; locate state and federal sources of funding; lobby

legislative and other policymaking bodies; assist locals (or regional consortia) to analyze district budgets to locate available dollars; and help state and local leaders develop grant writing skills.

- Assist locals in negotiating expanded professional development opportunities for their members. Such assistance should include model contract language as well as language for other kinds of labor-management arrangements, such as memoranda of understanding and trust agreements.

- Create state and local networks where leaders can share their experiences in increasing professional development opportunities and addressing the professional needs of their members.

State and local affiliates should:

- Review and make changes to leadership and staff training programs to ensure that they include strategies for leaders and staff to blend traditional union functions and professional issues/professional development.

- Take advantage of AFT-provided opportunities to build the capacity of leaders and staff to become more effective advocates, brokers, collaborators, and deliverers in the professional development arena.

- Train political and professional issues leaders so that each understands the work, the needs, and the challenges of the other.

- Assist building representatives to incorporate professional issues into their union responsibilities.

- Lobby for appropriate legislation on professional issues and professional development.

- Negotiate contract language that includes ways to provide time, support, resources, and incentives for members to engage in effective professional development.

3. Review and expand AFT professional development efforts.

The national AFT should:

- Systematically examine its professional development programs and, where appropriate, make changes. Such a review should include an examination of ER&D so as to enable the program to reach a greater proportion of members, ensure that the instruction models best practice for adult learners, and that the content meets members' needs.

- Seek funding for projects to develop union-sponsored professional development curricula on timely issues such as preparing highly qualified teachers to be mentors in induction programs for new teachers.

State and local affiliates should:

- Systematically examine professional development offerings and, where appropriate, make changes to ensure that local and state professional development efforts tap a larger proportion of the membership, are aligned with research-based findings about effective professional development, and include content that meets members' needs.

- Take advantage of professional development opportunities such as ER&D that are offered by the national AFT.

4. Disseminate information about recognized, research-based professional development practices and programs to assist state federations and locals in their roles as advocates, brokers, collaborators, and, to a lesser extent, deliverers of professional development.

The national AFT should:

- Compile information about effective professional development programs and practices and ways in which states and locals can access them.

- Develop criteria to assist state and local affiliates in selecting providers, programs, and practices; such criteria would be based on research findings about effective professional development.

State and local affiliates should:

- Use AFT criteria in selecting professional development providers, practices, and programs.
- Inform the AFT about providers, practices, and programs that meet the AFT criteria and that have been used effectively in their state or local.

5. Use technology to increase leaders' and members' access to, and communication about, professional issues and professional development.

The national AFT should:

- Explore strategies that employ technology as a tool to enhance the content and quality of and access to high-quality professional development.
- Investigate ways in which current AFT professional development efforts could be strengthened with an online component.
- Encourage affiliates to examine the Teachscape material and determine how it might fit into union efforts at improving professional development for their members.
- Expand the AFT's Web site to include model state language and contract language for professional development opportunities for members.
- Promote, and assist states and locals to develop electronic teacher networks that are content-specific, that provide accurate and timely information to members, and encourage collegiality and joint problem solving.
- Develop mechanisms that enable states, locals, and regional consortia to communicate with the national organization and with each other about professional issues and professional development programs and strategies.

State and local affiliates should:

- Explore strategies, including Teachscape, that employ technology as a tool to enhance the content and quality of, and access to, high-quality professional development.

- Work with the national AFT to develop electronic teacher networks that are content-specific, and that encourage collegiality and joint problem solving.
- Work with the national AFT to develop mechanisms that enable state and local leaders to communicate with each other about professional development programs and strategies.

6. Increase the capacity of the union to be effective in the area of professional issues/professional development by expanding current partnerships and developing new strategic alliances.

The national AFT should:

- Develop criteria for partnerships and alliances that would assist affiliates in providing professional development services and fundraising.
- Strengthen current partnerships and create new alliances with organizations committed to improving the professional practice of teachers and/or to enhancing the capacity of the union to be effective in the professional issues/professional development arena. Such organizations might include school districts, private providers, federally funded regional labs, and local colleges and universities.
- Periodically assess partnerships to determine their effectiveness and seek new partnerships and alliances.

State and local affiliates should:

- Develop partnerships and strategic alliances with state- and locally-based organizations committed to improving the professional practice of teachers and/or to enhancing the capacity of the union to be effective in the professional issues/professional development arena.
- Periodically assess partnerships to determine their effectiveness and develop new partnerships and alliances.

7. Provide ongoing information about and support for professional issues and professional development.

The national AFT should:

- Create materials for state and local affiliates to use,

which include: a self-assessment tool; scenarios of what good professional development looks like; research findings about effective professional development; strategies for embedding professional issues into union work and implementing effective professional development programs; examples of what other locals are doing; and model contract language.

- Expand networking opportunities for AFT leaders and staff.
- Develop evaluation tools to gauge the quality and effectiveness of our professional development programs. Such evaluation should include multiple indicators including assessments of the effects of professional development on student achievement.

State and local affiliates should:

- Use AFT tools and materials to strengthen professional issues/professional development efforts.
- Expand networking opportunities among local leaders.
- Develop, where feasible, state and local QuEST professional issues conferences.

These recommendations provide a framework for the union as we collectively strive to shape a culture of professional unionism that retains the principles on which the AFT was founded.

We understand that not all locals or state affiliates will be able to implement every recommendation, but all can do something. Context and circumstances matter. Furthermore, those that have or will develop the capacity to make these recommendations come to life may not be able to do so quickly. Likewise, the AFT cannot immediately implement all of these recommendations. Nonetheless, we can develop a strategy that in the long run enables us to become more effective in meeting the needs of our members and of the children they serve.

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APPENDIX A

Attributes of a True Profession

To be considered a true profession, an occupation must:

- Have a distinct body of knowledge—acknowledged by practitioner and consumer alike—that undergirds the profession and forms the basis for delivering high-quality services to clients
- Define for itself the nature of the training required of those who enter the field
- Require rigorous training to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to practice the profession
- Control the standards for entry into the profession
- Have its practitioners be a major voice in determining their working conditions
- Have its practitioners exercise independent judgment about client needs to ensure that those needs are met
- Evaluate the performance of practitioners and remove from the profession those whose performance falls below standards
- Require that practitioners continue to learn about advances in the field
- Induct its members into the profession in a systematic and rigorous fashion, and
- Have the respect of the larger society.

From: Shanker, A. (1996). "Quality Assurance—What Must Be Done to Strengthen the Teaching Profession." Phi Delta Kappan. *November, pp. 220-224.*

APPENDIX B

Research-Based Characteristics of Effective Professional Development

Research points to several common attributes of effective professional development, "effective" here defined as teacher learning that contributes to improved teaching practice as well as to student achievement gains. Effective professional development:

- **Is standards-based and aligned**—It revolves around the subjects teachers teach, the curriculum for which they are responsible, and the standards they are to help students meet.
- **Provides opportunities for teachers to engage deeply in subject matter**—Effective professional development honors teaching as an intellectual pursuit, one in which deepening knowledge of subject(s) taught is requisite to improving practice. There is, in fact, a critical link between teachers' own knowledge of subject matter and the skills that enable them to translate subject content into effective classroom learning activities. What teachers know and understand about content shapes their choices about instructional materials and strategies and significantly influences the level of skill they are able to bring to the tasks of diagnosing student needs, developing interventions when students falter academically, and assessing student progress (Darling-Hammond and Ball, 1997).
- **Is cumulative and sustained**—One-shot workshops, one-day courses, and one-time lectures do little to improve teaching practice. In order to have effect, pro-

fessional development programs need to be both long-term and long-range. They need to provide opportunities for teachers to observe one another teach, receive on-site coaching, and collectively examine student work.

- **Blends subject matter and pedagogy**—Effective professional development makes the connection between subject matter and pedagogy, between the content of instruction and instruction itself. And it is practical. It provides information and techniques teachers can readily apply in their classrooms, and it prepares teachers to recognize and address common student misunderstandings and errors in content.

- **Is job-embedded and site specific**—Effective professional development is integrated as part of teachers' everyday work and involves teams of teachers in schools making decisions about the knowledge and skills they need to lift student achievement.

ONLINE RESOURCES

For more information on professional development, please visit our Web site: **www.aft.org/edissues/teacherquality.** The site contains information for teachers, union leaders, and policymakers on critical issues such as teacher preparation and licensure, professional development, induction, peer assistance and review, and professional compensation. Follow the links on the site to learn more about initiatives in these areas and access downloadable files on publications relating to these and other timely issues. Here are examples of the kinds of publications you will find on the Web site:

Educational Research and Dissemination Program. A union-sponsored, research-based professional development program, created by the AFT through collaboration between practitioners and researchers to encourage classroom educators to improve their practice and their students' achievement by becoming users of research.

Principles for Professional Development. Professional development is a continuous process of individual and collective examination of practice. This AFT booklet examines professional development as a means to improve student achievement. (AFT, July 1995)

Professional Development: It's Union Work. Profiles of how AFT unions enhance teacher quality. (AFT, September 2000)

The Instructional Demands of Standards-Based Reform. Prepared for the AFT by Kate Jamentz, Director of Professional and Organizational Learning at WestEd. (AFT, July 2001)

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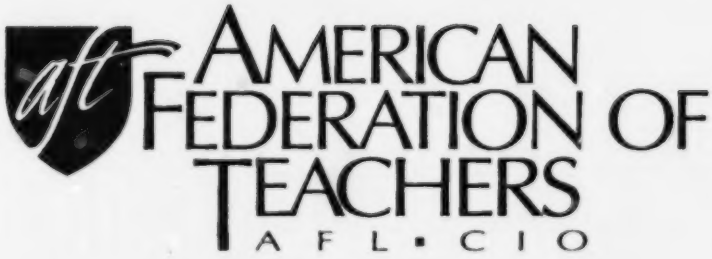

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